

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 DLOS-06 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 CEQ-02 COA-02 COME-00

EB-11 EPA-04 NSF-04 SCI-06 FEA-02 AEC-11 CEA-02

CIEP-02 FPC-01 INT-08 OMB-01 SAM-01 STR-08 TRSE-00

ACDA-19 AGR-20 DOTE-00 FMC-04 JUSE-00 CG-00 DRC-01

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R 180803Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3229
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL IZMIR
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL ADANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ENGR, LOS, GR, TU

SUBJECT: LOS: GREEK TURKISH DISPUTE OVER AEGEAN

REFS: A) STATE 46773 (NOTAL); B) ATHENS 1273;
C) ATHENS 1306; D) ANKARA 1402; E) ANKARA 1472;
AND RELATED CABLES

BEGIN SUMMARY: AUTHORITATIVE TURK MFA OFFICIAL (SOYLEMEZ) OUTLINES
TURKEY'S "FIRM BUT CONCILIATORY" POSITION ON AEGEAN CONTROVERSY, DE-
SCRIBING LATTER AS BASICALLY AN ECONOMIC AND NOT YET A POLITICAL OR
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PROBLEM. TURKS DO NOT ACCEPT GREEK POSITION BUT BELIEVE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT RE DIVISION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND RELATED ISSUES SHOULD AND COULD BE NEGOTIATED ASAP. OFFICIAL INDICATED, IN ADDITION :

A) THAT THE TURKS WERE DOUBTFUL THAT THE GREEKS WOULD UNILATERALLY EXTEND THEIR TERRITORIAL SEA TO THE TWELVE MILE LIMIT IN NEAR

FUTURE; B) THAT THE TURKS WERE NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO JOINT GREEK-TURKISH EXPLOITATION OF THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE AEGEAN; AND C) THAT A CONTINENTAL SHELF DIVISION MIGHT BE BASED ON AN ALLEGED GEOLOGICAL RIFT. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS WEEK WE HAD A LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH SOYLEMEZ, HEAD OF MFA'S INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPT, AND RESPONSIBLE FOR LOS MATTERS. SOYLEMEZ OUTLINED THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER THE AEGEAN AS FOLLOWS:

A) ON FEB 7 THE GREEK GOVT SENT A FORMAL NOTE TO THE GOT OUTLINING THE GREEK POSITION, COVERING NOT ONLY THE IMMEDIATE QUESTION OF DRILLING LEASES IN DISPUTED WATERS BUT ALSO THE OVERALL PROBLEM RE DELINEATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARIES. SOYLEMEZ STRESSED THAT THE WORD "PROTEST" WAS NOT IN THE GREEK NOTE, ALTHOUGH THE GREEKS MADE CLEAR THEY WERE NOT HAPPY WITH TURK ACTIONS RE OIL LEASES. MOST OF THE GREEK ARGUMENTS WERE PRESENTED DISPASSIONATELY AND WERE BASED ON THE 1958 CONVENTION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. BECAUSE OF POOR MISHANDLING, THE GREEK NOTE DID NOT COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE TURKISH MFA UNTIL ABOUT FEB 15.

B. THE TURK NOTE IN REPLY WAS DATED FEB 27. SOYLEMEZ DESCRIBED IT AS "FIRM BUT CONCILIATORY". THE TURKISH NOTE WAS EVEN LENGTHIER AND MORE TECHNICAL THAN THE GREEK NOTE AND TO A DEGREE IT ALSO EMPLOYED ARGUMENTS BASED ON THE 1958 CONVENTION, DESPITE THE FACT THAT TURKEY HAD NOT SIGNED IT. THE THRUST OF THE TURKISH NOTE WAS THAT THE AEGEAN WAS A SUI GENERIS SITUATION. DRAWING, HOWEVER, ON VARIOUS PRECEDENTS, THE TURK NOTE INDICATED BUT DID NOT EXPLICITLY PROPOSE THAT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND DIRECTLY RELATED ISSUES SHOULD BE RESOLVED BY A BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVTS. (WHEN WE ASKED WHY TURKS DID NOT SIMPLY PROPOSE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS SOYLEMEZ REPLIED TO EFFECT THAT THIS WAS NOT THE TURK STYLE, THAT TURKS DO NOT WANT TO BE IN POSITION OF HAVING THE OTHER PARTY REJECT THEIR FORMAL OVERTURE.)

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C. THE TURKS REGARDED THE GREEK ISLANDS IN THE EASTERN AEGEAN AS GEOLOGICALLY PART OF THE ANATOLIAN LAND MASS. TURKEY WAS NOT NECESSARILY WEDDED TO ALREADY ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES FOR DELINEATING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARIES AND SOYLEMEZ SAID THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF A GEOLOGICAL RIFT UNDER THE AEGEAN WHICH THEORETICALLY COULD BE USED AS

A GUIDE. FURTHER, TRKEY WAS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO POSSIBLE JOINT GREEK-TURKISH DEVELOPMENT OF THE PETROLEUM AND MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE AEGEAN.

D. FROM THE TURKISH VIEWPOINT, THE AEGEAN CONTROVERSY WAS STILL BASICALLY AN ECONOMIC ISSUE AND NOT YET A POLITICAL OR MILITARY PROBLEM. THE ECONOMIC CHARACTER OF THE ISSUE HAD BEEN GIVEN NEW EMPHASIS BY THE PRESENT ENERGY CRISIS, SUPPLEMENTED BY REPORTS THAT THE RECENT OIL STRIKES IN GREEK WATERS WERE OF CONSIDERABLE MAGNITUDE

NEVERTHELESS, SOYLEMZ ADDED, THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY HAD BEEN CONTINUOUSLY MONITORED FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS AND IN RECENT MONTHS PRES KORUTURK HIMSELF (A FORMER FLEET COMMANDER) HAD TAKEN A PERSONAL INTEREST, CHAIRING A MEETING OF MILITARY AND MINISTRY REPS ON THE SUBJECT. TURK MILITARY AND NAVAL AUTHORITIES WERE OF COURSE AWARE OF WHAT SOYLEMEZ DESCRIBED AS LONGSTANDING GREEK ASPIRATIONS TO EXTEND THE TERRITORIAL SEA BOUNDARIES TO TWELVE MILES BUT THEY WERE INCLINED TO DISCOUNT THE LIKHOOD OF EARLY GREEK ACTION. SOYLEMEZ NOTED THAT A GOOD MANY OTHER MARITIME COUNTRIES, NOTABLY THE USSR, WOULD BE INTERESTED IN AND CONCERNED ABOUT ANY SUCH MOVE.

E. IN ACCORD WITH ITS 1964 LAW, TURKEY DEFINED ITS TERRITORIAL SEAS ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY. ON THE BLACK SEA, FOR INSTANCE, THE SOVIETS WANTED A TWELVE MILE LIMIT AND SO THE TURKISH LIMIT WAS TWELVE MILES. CYPRUS, SYRIA AND BULGARIA SIMILARLY PROJECTED A TWELVE MILE LIMIT, HE SAID, AND TURKEY THEREFORE DID THE SAME FOR ITS TERRITORIAL SEAS FACING THESE COUNTRIES. (THIS WAS NEWS TO US AS REGARDS CYPRUS SINCE WE RECALL THAT THE TURKS ON ONE OCCASION CLEARLY TRIED TO CHALLENGE THE CYPRIOT TWELVE MILE LIMIT DURING A SEMI ANNUAL TRANSFER OF THE TURKISH MILITARY CONTINGENT ON CYPRUS.)

2. SOYLEMEZ SUMMED UP THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE TURKISH POSITION AS FOLLOWS: A BILATERAL AGREEMENT CAME AND SHOULD BE REACHED ASAP, PRIOR

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TO THE CARACAS LOS CONFERENCE. TURKEY WAS PREPARED TO BE CONCILIATORY

A DIVISION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BASED ON SO-CALLED "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES", INCLUDING THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE GREEK ISLANDS TO THE TURKISH MAINLAND, PREFERABLY SHOULD BE MADE. A SATISFACTORY FALL BACK

POSITION WOULD BE TO FOLLOW THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUIDISTANCE (MEDIAN LINE), BUT BETWEEN THE MAJOR LAND MASSES, NOT BETWEEN THE GREEK ISLANDS AND THE TURKISH MAINLAND.

3. IN A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION ON TV NIGHT OF MAR 13, FONMINGUNES IMPLIED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH GREECE OVER THE CONTINENTAL SHELF

ISSUE SHOULD BE STARTED, ALTHOUGH HE MADE CLEAR THEY HAD NOT YET BEGUN. CONTRADICTING CLAIMS MADE IN ATHENS, HE SAID THAT THE AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF WAS FAIRLY SHALLOW IN PROXIMITY TO THE TURKISH MAIN-

LAND BUT FELL OFF STEEPLY FROM THE GREEK SIDE. HE MADE CLEAR TURKEY COULD NOT ACCEPT A GREEK WALL STOPPING TURK ACCESS TO THE AEGEAN AND THAT IN ACCORD WITH THE LATEST CONCEPTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW TURKEY WOULD CLAIM ITS CONTINENTAL SHELF UP TO A DEPTH OF 200 METERS. HE CONCLUDED THAT TURKEY WOULD BE SEEKING LEGAL AND DIPLOMATIC MEANS OF SOLVING THE PROBLEMS.

4. WE HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED PETROLEUM LEASING PROBLEM WITH YILDIRIM, DEPUTY DIRGEN IN OFFICE OF PETROLEUM AFFAIRS OF TURK MIN OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES. YILDIRIM CONFIRMED THAT NO TURKEISH OR TURKISH-CONTRACTED EXPLORATORY ACTIVITY IN THE DISPUTED AREAS WAS UNDER WAY. HE EXPLAINED THAT CONTINENTAL OIL COMPANY HAD BEEN OFFERED CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS FOR EXPLORATION AROUND IMROZ ISLAND, BUT HAD REFUSED. YILDRIM EXPLAINED THAT THE TOAL AREA OPEN FOR EXPLORATION SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED A SIX MILE WIDE TERRITORY AROUND THE GREEK ISLANDS.

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